

State aid: Commission approves €171.7 million compensation to Poste Italiane for distributing newspapers at reduced tariffs

The Commission has approved under EU State aid rules a €171.74 million public service compensation granted by Italy to Poste Italiane for distributing, at reduced tariffs, newspapers and publications of book publishers and non-profit organisations in the period 2017-2019.

Italy entrusted Poste Italiane with the obligation of providing this service of general economic interest (“SGEI”), which aims at preserving and fostering media plurality and diversity of views by charging reduced rates to publishers and newspapers for the distribution of certain categories of press.

The Commission assessed the measure under the [EU State aid rules on public service compensation](#). These rules enable Member States, subject to certain conditions, to compensate companies that have been entrusted with public service obligations for the extra cost of providing these services.

The Commission found that the level of compensation did not exceed the amount needed to cover the net cost borne by Poste Italiane for providing the service. As a result, it concluded that the measure was proportionate and did not lead to overcompensation.

Furthermore, in 2018, the Italian authorities carried out a public consultation with a view to verifying the public interest perception for the protection of press distribution for the publishing materials at issue. The consultation confirmed that the SGEI consisting in the reduced tariffs offered to publishers and not-for-profit organizations is considered as important by users.

The Commission concluded that the Italian measure is in line with EU State aid rules, as it fosters a service of general public interest and promotes media plurality, without unduly distorting competition.

Background

Poste Italiane is the largest provider of postal services in Italy. Since 1999, it has been designated as the universal postal service provider for the entire national territory of Italy.

The non-confidential version of the decision will be published in the [State-Aid Register](#) on [DG Competition’s](#) website under case number SA.48492 once any confidentiality issues have been resolved. The ‘[State Aid Weekly e-News](#)’ electronic newsletter lists the most recent decisions on State aid published

in the Official Journal and on the internet.